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ABSTRACT

An analysis of the pass-withdraw (P-W) option open to students in lieu of a letter grade (A,B,C,D,F) was made at Metropolitan Community College, using data drawn from the fall quarter, 1971, and winter quarter, 1975. Letter grades carried grade points while P-W did not, no academic credit was given for W, and students could take the P-W option in only one class per quarter. From a student body of 1,786 in 1971, 12.7% requested the P-W option, compared with 11.1% of 1,975 students in 1975. Of these, 65.5% in 1971 wanted a P rather than a D grade, 30.1% chose P over C or D, and 4.4% took P instead of B, C, or D. By contrast, in 1975, 42.5% chose P over D, 43.4% opted for P rather than C or D, and 14.2% requested P in place of B, C, or D. Of those requesting the option in 1971, 42.9% received P grades, 17.3% W grades, and the remainder received letter grades; whereas in 1975, 48.9% received P grades, 12.8% were given W grades, and 38.3% gained letter grades. In both years, the largest number of requests were from mathematics, science, and physical education classes, with 67 in 1971 and 84 in 1975. The next highest numbers were in humanities, with 26 in 1971 compared with 74 in 1975. While requests for the P-W option remained stable, changes occurred primarily in attitude toward what is an acceptable grade. (RT)

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Analysis of "P" Grade Option in Fall 1971 and Winter 1975

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Since the 1970-71 academic year, Metro students have been able to elect to receive a "P", or pass grade carrying no grade points, instead of any grade "A" through "D". Only one course per quarter may be elected for a "P" grade. The requests for the P-W option were analyzed for the Fall Quarter 1971 and, most recently, for the Winter Quarter, 1975. The data are presented in the three tables attached.

Table I summarizes and compares data over the three and a half year period. The proportion of the student body requesting the P-W option was 12.7 in Fall 1971 compared to 11.1 in Winter, 1975. Of the total requests filed, 65.5 percent in 1971 wanted a "P" rather than a "D" grade compared to 42.5 percent in 1975; 30.1 percent in 1971 wanted a "P" rather than a "C" or "D" versus 43.4 percent in 1975; and 4.4 percent in 1971 wanted a "P" rather than a "B", "C", or "D" compared to 14.2 percent in 1975. A decline in the value a "B" or "C" grade is perceived to have seems clear in these figures.

In 1971, of those choosing the option, 42.9 percent received "P" grades, 17.3 percent "W" (no credit) grades and the balance received grades carrying grade points. In 1975, 48.9 percent received "P" grades, 12.8 percent, "W's" and the balance received grades carrying grade points.

Tables II and III give detailed data by academic division for the two periods discussed. The largest proportion of requests for the P-W option have come for the Math, Science and Physical Education classes--two thirds did in 1971 and about two fifths did in 1975. The second division receiving the most requests has been the humanities division--11.5 percent in 1971 and 33.8 percent in 1975.

It appears from these data that requests for the P-W option have been relatively stable over the period concerned with changes taking place primarily in attitude toward what is an acceptable grade. Grade inflation appears to be involved.

JC 770 433

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Table I

Summary of Fall 1971 and Winter 1975 Data of "P" Grade Requests

Quarter	Fall 1971	Winter 1975	
Total Head Count	1786	1975	
Total "P" Requests Filed for Quarter	226	219	
Proportion of Student Body Filing Requests	12.7	11.1	
Of Total Requests Filed:	65.5%	42.5%	wanted "P" rather than "D"
	30.1%	43.4%	wanted "P" rather than "C" or "D"
	4.4%	14.2%	wanted "P" rather than "B", "C", or "D"
Of Total Requests Filed:	97	107	received "P"s
	42.9%	48.9%	received "P"s
	39	28	received "W"s
	17.3%	12.8%	received "W"s

Table II
Winter Quarter 1975 Student Requests for "P" Grades
and the Actual Assignment of Quarter Grades

	Request "P" if Grade is:	Grade Received A	B	C	P	W	Total P Requests		Total P's Granted	
Business	D	-	-	3	2	4	9		2	
	C, D	1	-	-	3	1	5		3	
	B, C, D	-	-	-	2	1	3		2	
							17			7
Humanities (inc. Art)	D	-	1	21	5	1	28		5	
	C, D	1	8	-	25	1	35		25	
	B, C, D	4	-	-	5	2	11		5	
							74			35
Health	D	-	-	2	2	-	4		2	
	C, D	-	4	-	3	1	8		3	
	B, C, D	-	-	-	-	1	1		-	
							13			5
English (inc. Sp.)	D	1	3	2	-	3	9		-	
	C, D	2	4	-	7	3	16		7	
	B, C, D	1	-	-	4	1	6		4	
							31			11
Math, Science & P.E.	D	-	2	17	17	7	43		17	
	C, D	-	6	-	25	-	31		25	
	B, C, D	1	-	-	7	2	10		7	
							84			49
Totals		11	28	45	107	28	219	100.0%	107	48.9
	D						93	42.5%		
	C, D						95	43.4%		
	B, C, D						31	14.2%		

(Alice Doll)

Table III
Fall 1971 Requests for P Grades and P's Given

Division	Request	A	B	C	P	W	Total P's Req.	Grtd.	
Business	P/D	-	-	5	1	3	9		
	P/C	-	1	3	3	2	9		
	P/B	-	-	-	-	-	-		
							18	7	
Humanities	P/D	-	2	5	1	1	9		
	P/C	4	4	4	2	1	15		
	P/B	-	-	1	-	1	2		
							26	8	
Soc. Science	P/D	-	4	6	2	4	16		
	P/C	-	3	1	1	-	5		
	P/B	-	1	-	-	1	2		
							23	5	
Language Arts	P/D	-	-	-	2	3	5		
	P/C	-	1	3	-	-	4		
	P/B	-	-	-	-	-	-		
							9	5	
Math,	P/D	-	4	13	27	13	57		
Science,	P/C	1	2	9	6	4	22		
P.E.	P/B	1	-	1	1	1	4		
							83	44	
Science for	P/D	-	3	30	15	4	52		
Living--	P/C	-	1	8	4	-	13		
Nursing	P/B	-	1	-	-	1	2		
							67	28	
Total		6	27	89	65	39	226	97	42.9%

(C. Fong)

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